

Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D.C. 20505

4 September 2019

Mr. Joseph Lloyd  
MuckRock News  
DEPT MR 59351  
411A Highland Avenue  
Somerville, MA 02144

Reference: F-2018-02307

Dear Mr. Lloyd:

This is a final response to your 13 August 2018 Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request for **any and all materials regarding Harold Wilson**. We processed your request in accordance with the FOIA, 5 U.S.C. § 552, as amended, and the CIA Information Act, 50 U.S.C. § 3141, as amended.

We completed a thorough search for records responsive to your request and located one document, which we determined can be released in its entirety. A copy of the document is enclosed at Tab A.

We also determined that six documents can be released in segregable form with deletions made on the basis of FOIA exemptions (b)(1), (b)(3), and /or (b)(6). Exemption (b)(3) pertains to information exempt from disclosure by statute. The relevant statutes are Section 6 of the Central Intelligence Agency Act of 1949, as amended, and Section 102A(i)(l) of the National Security Act of 1947, as amended. Copies of the documents are enclosed at Tab B.

With respect to any other records, in accordance with Section 3.6(a) of Executive Order 13526, the CIA can neither confirm nor deny the existence or nonexistence of records responsive to your request. The fact of the existence or nonexistence of such records is itself currently and properly classified and is intelligence sources and methods information protected from disclosure by Section 6 of the CIA Act of 1949, as amended, and Section 102A(i)(l) of the National Security Act of 1947, as amended. Therefore, your request is denied pursuant to FOIA exemptions (b)(1) and (b)(3). As the CIA Information and Privacy Coordinator, I am the CIA official responsible for this determination. You have the right to appeal this response to the Agency Release Panel, in my care, within 90 days from the date of this letter. Please include the basis of your appeal.

If you have any questions regarding our response, you may contact us at:

Central Intelligence Agency  
Washington, DC 20505  
Information and Privacy Coordinator  
703-613-3007 (Fax)

Please be advised that you may seek dispute resolution services from the CIA's FOIA Public Liaison or from the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) of the National Archives and Records Administration. OGIS offers mediation services to help resolve disputes between FOIA requesters and Federal agencies. You may reach CIA's FOIA Public Liaison at:

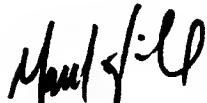
703-613-1287 (FOIA Hotline)

The contact information for OGIS is:

Office of Government Information Services  
National Archives and Records Administration  
8601 Adelphi Road – OGIS  
College Park, MD 20740-6001  
202-741-5770  
877-864-6448  
202-741-5769 (fax)  
ogis@nara.gov

Contacting the CIA's FOIA Public Liaison or OGIS does not affect your right to pursue an administrative appeal.

Sincerely,



Mark Lilly  
Information and Privacy Coordinator

Enclosures

**TAB A**

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

James Harold WILSON  
Prime Minister and First Lord  
of the Treasury

Harold Wilson at 48 became the youngest British Prime Minister in this century when the Labor Party won a narrow victory in the October 1964 election. Party leader only since February 1963, he successfully united Labor's diverse elements within a few months, bringing it back into power after 13 years in opposition. He has shown the same managerial skill in his government appointments, placing "moderates" in key cabinet posts, assigning safe spots to "leftists." The juxtaposition, which gives him room for maneuvering, should enable him to retain effective control of the government.



A former economics don and statistician, Wilson has a brilliant mind, organizational ability, debating skill and wit, and unusual political acumen. Since he entered Parliament in 1945, he has held a series of important posts: President of the Board of Trade in the Attlee government (1947-51); Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer (1955-61); and Shadow Foreign Secretary (1961-63). He has never been personally popular with the Labor MP's but is respected for his talents. The center and right wing in particular accused him of overweening ambition, opportunism, deviousness, and shifting political loyalties. He was elected party leader apparently because he was the only Labor MP with the necessary qualities for a potential prime minister. Although he has "flirted" with the left, Wilson is not a doctrinaire socialist. He is above all a pragmatist, well aware of the realities of power. His commitment to close Anglo-US relations is not based solely on sentiment.

Called variously a "loner," "a cold fish," and "a cat who walks by himself," Wilson has no close political friends, and shuns ordinary social life. It is said he trusts no one completely, and vice versa. Before going to Downing Street, he and his wife and two sons lived quietly in a modest house in Hampstead. He has few interests, apart from politics, reading, and golf. A short, stocky man, he smokes a pipe constantly, enjoys simple food (canned salmon, cold roast beef), and drinks moderately (lager, bourbon whiskey). The Wilsons will celebrate their silver wedding anniversary on New Year's Day 1965.

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**TAB B**

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# Biographic Report

*Harold WILSON*  
*Prime Minister of Great Britain*

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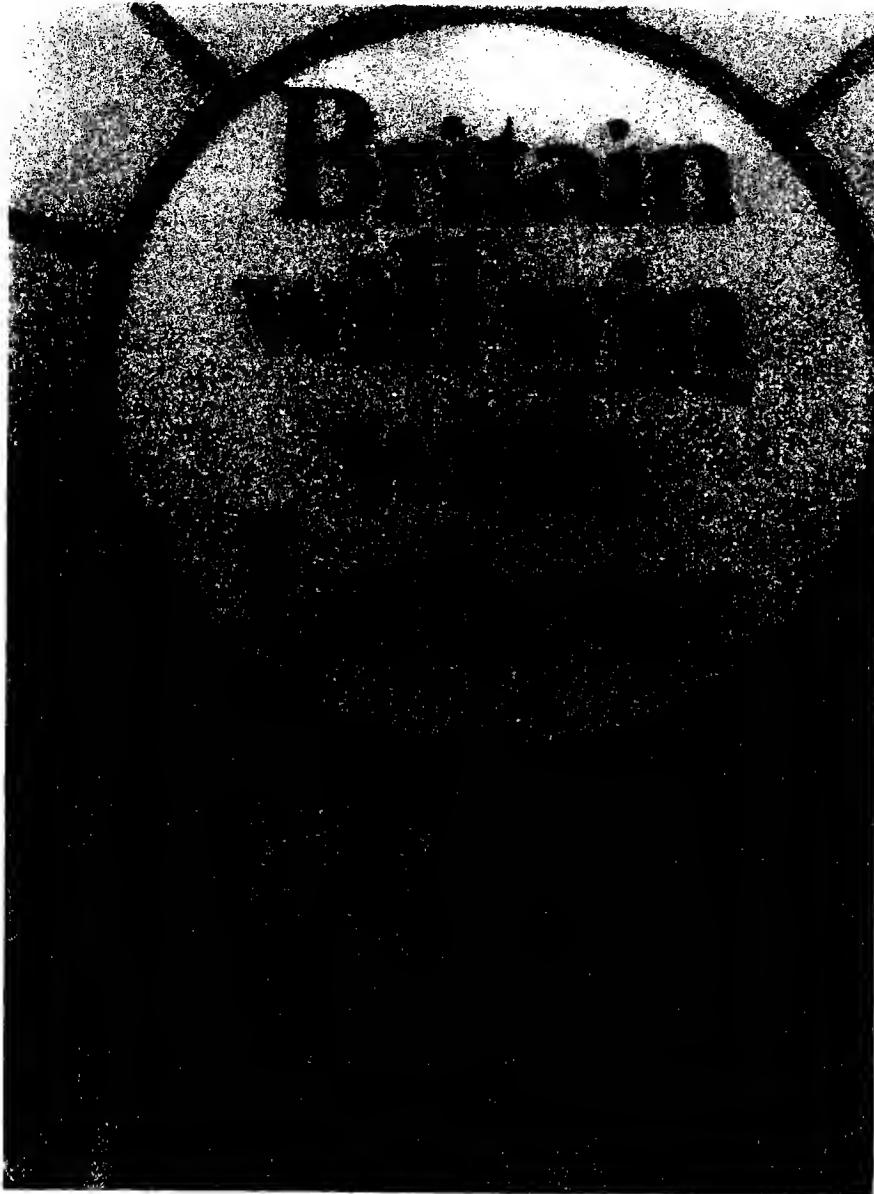
[Redacted]  
BR 74-59  
October 1974

**NATIONAL SECURITY INFORMATION**  
**Unauthorized Disclosure Subject to Criminal Sanctions**



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**Prime Minister Wilson campaigning in September**

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## PREFACE

As a result of the Labor Party victory at the polls on 10 October 1974, party leader Harold Wilson heads his fourth government in 10 years. It is the first time in this century that a British Prime Minister has won four elections. Wilson led his first two Cabinets during 1964-70 and was leader of the Shadow Government during the next 3½ years. In the election held on 28 February 1974, neither the Conservatives nor the Laborites gained a majority; Wilson formed a minority government—Britain's first in more than 40 years—that lasted until the Labor victory in October.

When he announced on 18 September that a general election would again be held, this time on 10 October, Wilson acknowledged that a second election within a year was something very few people would want to see at a time of very grave economic difficulties. Launching his party's campaign under the slogan "Britain will win with Labour," he urged voters to give Labor full control of Parliament because, he said, his government "has the policies for our national recovery" from the "gravest economic crisis since the war." Led by Wilson, the party generally projected an image of ministerial competence, social concern and self-confidence; it kept its leftwing figures and more radical policies somewhat under wraps.

When the final vote was tallied, Labor had gained 319 seats, a razor-thin majority of three over the combined strength of Conservatives (276), Liberals (13), Scottish Nationalists (11), Welsh Nationalists (3), Ulster Unionists (10) and others (3) in the 635-member House of Commons.

This does not give Prime Minister Wilson the strong mandate he aimed for in calling the election, but it does provide the majority that eluded him in the February general election.

*This report was prepared by the Central Reference Service and was coordinated within CIA as appropriate. Comments and questions may be directed to* [redacted]

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**UNITED KINGDOM****(James) Harold WILSON****Prime Minister**

Labor Party Leader and Prime Minister Harold Wilson successfully led his party to victory in the general election held on 10 October 1974. For the previous 7 months he had headed Britain's first minority government in more than 40 years. He is a consummate politician—skillful, shrewd and subtle.

Because his 3-seat margin in Parliament is so slim, Wilson has little latitude to redeem his campaign pledges to party leftwingers and to the trade unions that form Labor's popular support. His government is expected to move toward the center and away from the strong leftist influence of the past; but in any event, Wilson will not turn back from the party's priority demands: the nationalization of development land and a state share of 51 percent in companies that discover oil in the North Sea.

Wilson was first elected a Labor Member of Parliament in 1945. He represented the Ormskirk Division of Lancashire until 1950 and has represented the Huyton Division of Lancashire ever since. Despite his lack of general popularity and his inability to lead the party aggressively, he has long been a favorite of Labor's left wing. In January 1963, after the sudden death of party leader Hugh Gaitskell, Wilson won easily over George Brown, the heir presumptive to the position. Wilson's support in Parliament came largely from Labor's leftwing faction, but he could not have won without help from the predominantly moderate Laborites.

Never a doctrinaire socialist, but rather a pragmatist who is keenly aware of the realities of power, Wilson has shown great skill in persuading the diverse and sometimes conflicting elements within his party to work together. He has a serious problem of maintaining discipline within the rambunctious Parliamentary Labor Party—the Laborite Members of Parliament—and he will have to take a firm stand to control the extremists in his government. Some of Wilson's closest associates have been charged with corruption, and several highly respected Laborites have resigned from the party in protest against its domination by the trade unions and its drift leftwards. Two of his Cabinet Ministers—Mrs. Shirley Williams and Roy Jenkins—say they will resign if the Labor government takes Britain out of the Common Market.



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Because of the party's success in the recent election, Wilson will continue his party leadership. There is no heir apparent and the party would be hard pressed to find another leader so highly skillful and resilient. Wilson's problem now is to convince the party and the public that his government can deal with the country's critical problems.

#### Problems Facing the New Government

##### *The Economy*

The Prime Minister's immediate concern will be to stimulate Britain's sagging economy. The morning after his reelection, he admitted that "it will indeed be a hell of a slog for the next couple of years." In March 1974 he inherited an economy plagued with: an inflation rate of about 17 percent; rising unemployment; a record trade deficit of about \$10 billion; and declining production, caused by the 3-day work week instituted during the winter, when the coal miners were on a prolonged strike.

Wilson and his Cabinet settled the strike by giving the miners virtually what they wanted and put industry back on a regular production schedule. Mandatory wage controls were replaced by voluntary restraints, and the Industrial Relations Act, opposed by the unions, was repealed. Wilson moved cautiously in proposing new wealth and gift taxes, launching a defense review and tempering Labor's pledge for expanded nationalization.

The heart of Wilson's Labor Party program was and will continue to be the social contract. Under the terms of this fragile agreement, the government agreed to meet certain union demands—to raise pension and social security benefits, to freeze rents and to stabilize mortgage interest rates—and in exchange the unions agreed to curb their members' demands for wage increases.

For the future, Wilson's government is committed to a continuous enrichment of this social contract. The promised additional benefits to the workers include a better deal for pensioners; a revision of income taxes so that the affluent will bear a larger burden; and more programs to aid the poor. Wilson must make both the rank and file and the union leaders happy but has reminded them of the other half of the contract—wage restraint. He has warned them that Britain "cannot expect any significant increase in living standards in the next year or so" and that the country cannot afford "power groups, whoever they are, trying to seize more than their share of what is available."

##### *Defense*

Despite his party's determination to make drastic cuts in the defense budget and reduce Britain's defense commitments, Wilson has moved

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slowly to implement the pledges. (His party's left wing has pressed for a 30 percent slash in defense expenditures and the removal of nuclear bases from Britain.) Wilson has said that, starting from the basis of the multi-lateral disarmament negotiations, Labor would seek to remove Polaris bases from Britain. He added, "We have renounced any intention of moving toward a new generation of strategic nuclear weapons."

Wilson has also asserted that Labor will continue its support for NATO as an instrument of détente as well as of defense. The government's ultimate objective is to achieve a "satisfactory relationship in Europe" through the concurrent phasing out of both NATO and the Warsaw Pact. Labor will also seek to bring the current negotiations in the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe to a successful end.

#### *Northern Ireland*

Labor is aiming for a political solution in Northern Ireland that will enable Catholics and Protestants to work together. Wilson has said that any new Ulster government must be based on power-sharing. He has said that British troops will not be withdrawn before a political settlement is achieved.

Wilson lacks experience and understanding of Ulster's problems, however. He demonstrated this lack by alienating the Protestants there in mid-1974, when he publicly referred to them as "spongery."

#### **Foreign Relations**

##### *With the United States*

The keystone of Labor's foreign policy has been good relations with the United States, and Wilson proudly states that Anglo-US relations are now better than they have been for some years. He is personally friendly toward this country

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Wilson has visited the United States often during the past 10 years. He met former President Richard Nixon several times during 1974 in European capitals.

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Secretary of State Kissinger and Prime Minister Wilson, July 1974

*With European Neighbors*

As leader of the Labor Party and as Prime Minister, Wilson has generally maintained close relations with the leaders of Europe's dominant powers, France and Germany. They have not met often, however, and their discussions have focused on European rather than international matters. During March-October 1974 French officials dealt with Wilson's minority government as if it were a lame duck administration. The few private talks held between Wilson and French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing centered on European Community problems, because the Labor government has been seeking better membership terms. The two governments have also agreed to continue the construction of the Concorde, the Anglo-French supersonic airplane.

He initially supported Britain's move to join the Common Market but soon began to vacillate. Under pressure from anti-Market forces in his party, Wilson has begun a renegotiation of the terms agreed to in 1972 by the Conservative government. His government is pledged to hold a referendum within 12 months to let the electorate express its views on the new terms.

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### *With Other Countries*

Wilson promises that a Labor government will oppose all forms of racial discrimination and colonialism everywhere and will support the liberation movements of southern Africa. He has paid tribute to the strength of the Commonwealth countries, pointing out that they have shown close harmony in dealing with problems affecting the Third World.

### **Early Life and Career**

The son of an industrial chemist, James Harold Wilson was born in Yorkshire on 11 March 1916. He won scholarships to secondary schools and to Jesus College, Oxford, where he graduated with first class honors in philosophy, politics and economics. In 1937, at the age of 21, he became a lecturer in economics at New College, Oxford, and the following year he was a fellow of University College.

During 1940-41 Wilson was economic assistant to the War Cabinet Secretariat, and in 1942-43 he served as secretary of the Greene board of investigation into miners' wages. In 1943 he was appointed director of economics and statistics in the Ministry of Fuel and Power.

Wilson was appointed parliamentary secretary to the Ministry of Works in 1945 and transferred to the Trade Ministry as secretary for overseas trade in March 1947. In October 1947 he received his first Cabinet-level post as President of the Board of Trade, at the unusually early age of 31. Wilson resigned that post in April 1951 in protest against the heavy cost of the government's rearmament program. Later, while in opposition, he served as his party's chief spokesman on financial affairs, and then on foreign affairs, until his election as leader in 1963.

### **Prime Minister**

#### **1964-70**

Wilson became the youngest British Prime Minister in this century when he led the Labor Party to a narrow victory in the October 1964 general election. During his first year in office, he successfully met a series of financial and political crises and established himself as a national leader. His party was returned to power with a substantial majority in the general election of March 1966, and he formed his second government.

Beginning in 1967, political and economic setbacks at home and abroad seriously reduced the morale and prestige of Wilson's government and its standing before the electorate. A series of strikes, defeats in by-elections, failure to gain Common Market membership; and a reduced loyalty among

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leading Cabinet members all combined to create a "crisis in confidence" in his leadership. He called a snap election in June 1970, a year before his term of office formally expired; and in spite of consistently favorable polls throughout the 3-week campaign, his party was defeated.

The defeat was attributed to a combination of overconfidence, Labor Party apathy, and an unexpectedly strong consumer revolt over continuing inflation. Wilson's position within the party remained unchallenged, however, and in July 1970 he was overwhelmingly reelected as leader by the Labor Members of Parliament. He served as opposition leader in Parliament during 1970-74.

#### 1974

In February 1974 Conservative Prime Minister Edward Heath called an election to determine, as he said, who really rules Britain—the government or the trade unions. (His government was unable to reach a negotiated settlement with the coal miners and trade unions, and the resulting shortages forced him to implement a 3-day work week and other austerity measures.) After the election, in which neither the Conservatives nor the Laborites gained a majority, Heath resigned. Wilson's Labor Party won fewer popular votes but more seats in Parliament—301 to 296 for the Conservatives and 38 scattered among other parties—and the Queen charged him with forming a minority government.

#### Personal Data

Wilson's colleagues regard him as more of a compromiser than a man of strong convictions. He likes to listen to all views on a subject and then try to make the decision that will satisfy the most people. His brilliant mind, political acumen and phenomenal debating skill and wit are offset, in the eyes of his critics, by a record of opportunism, deviousness and shifting loyalties. He inspires admiration and, at times, respect—but not affection.

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His deftness in parliamentary maneuvering and persuasion

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A short, stocky man, Wilson smokes a pipe constantly; enjoys plain food, and drinks moderately (lager or bourbon). He shuns social life, keeps his personal life private, and apparently has no close political "cronies." Raised as a Congregationalist, Wilson is a man of simple tastes and habits.

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Apart from his family and politics, reading and an occasional round of golf are his only known relaxations. He follows soccer, dislikes cocktail parties and shows no interest in music or the theater.

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### Family

In 1940 Wilson married Gladys Mary Baldwin, the daughter of a Congregationalist minister.

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They stay in their townhouse near the Parliament building, rather than No. 10 Downing Street, the official residence of the Prime Minister;

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Mr. Wilson with Giles, Mrs. Wilson, Robin and daughter-in-law Joy (1969)

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[Redacted]

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The Wilsons have two grown sons.

[Redacted]

Both Wilson and his wife are authors. Mrs. Wilson's *Selected Poems* was on the bestsellers list in 1970. The Prime Minister's books include: *New Deal for Coal*, 1945; *In Place of Dollars*, 1952; *The War on World Poverty*, 1953; *The Relevance of British Socialism*, 1964; *Purpose in Politics*, 1964; *The New Britain*, 1964; *Purpose in Power*, 1966; and *The Labor Government, 1964-70*, 1971.

22 October 1974

[Redacted]

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## UNITED KINGDOM

(James) Harold WILSON

## Prime Minister

Labor Party leader and Prime Minister Harold Wilson successfully led his party to victory in the general election held on 10 October 1974. For the previous 7 months he had headed Britain's first minority government in more than 40 years. A Labor Member of Parliament since 1945, he also served as Prime Minister during 1964-70. He is a consummate politician—skillful, shrewd and subtle.



(1974)

Wilson has long been a favorite of Labor's left wing. He is not a doctrinaire socialist, but rather he is a pragmatist who is keenly aware of the realities of power. He has shown great skill in persuading the diverse and sometimes conflicting elements within his party to work together. He has a serious problem of maintaining discipline within the rambunctious Parliamentary Labor Party—the Laborite Members of Parliament—and has had to take a firm stand to control the extremists in his government.

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[redacted] his position on British membership in the European Communities (EC) [redacted] eventually he was forced to voice his support for continued membership. His party was deeply split over EC membership in the 1970's: The anti-Marketeers argued that Britain would ultimately lose control over its own affairs; the pro-Marketeers argued that without membership, the British economy would flounder and the country's already muted voice in world affairs would diminish further. To keep his party together, Wilson devised the plan of negotiating better terms for Britain's membership and letting the voters decide whether they wanted continued membership. Following the referendum in June 1975 in which the voters overwhelmingly endorsed continued membership, Wilson moved the most vocal opponent to another Cabinet position.

Wilson's political survival is apparently a measure of his resourcefulness and a reflection of the inability of his party opponents to mount a broad-based challenge to his leadership. There is no readily recognized heir apparent and the party would be hard pressed to find another leader so highly skillful and resilient.

*for ref*  
*1/2/74*

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(James) Harold WILSON

The Prime Minister has made some progress in correcting Britain's economic problems, but admitted in October 1974 and again in January 1976 that "it will indeed be a hell of a slog for the next couple of years."

Because of economic restraints, the government passed a 10-year defense review which pared defense spending. Wilson has asserted, however, that Labor will continue its support for NATO as an instrument of detente as well as of defense.

The keystone of Labor's foreign policy has been good relations with the United States, and Wilson proudly states that Anglo-US relations are now better than they have been for some years. He is personally friendly toward this country and unhesitatingly admits that US-UK relations have top priority in his government.

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Wilson has visited the United States often during the past 10 years. He met former President Richard Nixon several times during 1974 in European capitals. On a state visit to Washington in January 1975, he met President Gerald Ford; the two leaders also met in London and elsewhere in Europe several times in 1975.

#### Early Life and Career

The son of an industrial chemist, James Harold Wilson was born in Yorkshire on 11 March 1916. He won scholarships to secondary schools and to Jesus College, Oxford, where he graduated with first class honors in philosophy, politics and economics. In 1937, at the age of 21, he became a lecturer in economics at New College, Oxford, and the following year he was a fellow of University College.

During 1940-41 Wilson was economic assistant to the War Cabinet Secretariat, and in 1942-43 he served as secretary of the Greene board of investigation into miners' wages. In 1943 he was appointed director of economics and statistics in the Ministry of Fuel and Power.

Wilson was first elected a Labor Member of Parliament in 1945. He represented the Ormskirk Division of Lancashire until 1950 and has represented the Huyton Division of Lancashire ever

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(James) Harold WILSON

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Prime Minister (1964-70)

Wilson became the youngest British Prime Minister in this century when he led the Labor Party to a narrow victory in the October 1964 general election. During his first year in office, he successfully met a series of financial and political crises and established himself as a national leader. His party was returned to power with a substantial majority in the general election of March 1966, and he formed his second government.

Beginning in 1967, political and economic setbacks at home and abroad seriously reduced the morale and prestige of Wilson's government and its standing before the electorate. A series of strikes, defeats in by-elections, failure to gain Common Market membership, and a reduced loyalty among leading Cabinet members all combined to create a "crisis in confidence" in his leadership. He called a snap election in June 1970, a year before his term of office formally expired; and in spite of consistently favorable polls throughout the 3-week campaign, his party was defeated.

The defeat was attributed to a combination of overconfidence, Labor Party apathy and an unexpectedly strong consumer revolt over continuing inflation. The single most important issue, however, was the dispute between the Wilson government and the trade unions over Wilson's attempt to establish a strong legal framework to bring some order to Britain's fractious industrial relations. Wilson's position within the party remained unchallenged, however, and in July 1970 he was overwhelmingly reelected as leader by the Labor Members of Parliament. He served as opposition leader in Parliament during 1970-74.

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(James) Harold WILSON

Since 1974

In February 1974 Conservative Prime Minister Edward Heath called an election to determine, as he said, who really rules Britain—the government or the trade unions. (His government was unable to reach a negotiated settlement with the coal miners and trade unions, and the resulting shortages forced him to implement a 3-day work week and other austerity measures.) After the election, in which neither the Conservatives nor the Laborites gained a majority, Heath resigned. Wilson's Labor Party won fewer popular votes but more seats in Parliament—301 to 296 for the Conservatives and 38 scattered among other parties—and the Queen charged him with forming a minority government. In the October 1974 general election, Wilson's party won 319 seats in Parliament, resulting in a 3-seat margin. Since then, because of deaths, resignations and by-elections, Wilson's working majority has been reduced to one.

Personal Data

Wilson's colleagues regard him as more of a compromiser than a man of strong convictions. He likes to listen to all views on a subject and then try to make the decision that will satisfy the most people. His brilliant mind, political acumen and phenomenal debating skill and wit are offset, in the eyes of his critics, by a record of opportunism, deviousness and shifting loyalties. He inspires admiration and, at times, respect—but not affection.

His deftness in parliamentary maneuvering and persuasion

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A short, stocky man, Wilson smokes a pipe constantly, enjoys plain food, and drinks moderately (lager or bourbon). He shuns social life, keeps his personal life private, and apparently has no close political cronies. Raised as a Congregationalist, Wilson is a man of simple tastes and habits.

Apart from his family and politics, reading and an occasional round of golf are his only known relaxations. He follows soccer, dislikes cocktail parties and shows no interest in music or the theater.

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[redacted] (b)(3)

(James) Harold WILSON

Family

In 1940 Wilson married Gladys Mary Baldwin, the daughter of a Congregationalist minister. [redacted]

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[redacted]

The Wilsons have two grown sons. [redacted]

(b)(6)

[redacted]

Both Wilson and his wife are authors. Mrs. Wilson's Selected Poems was on the bestsellers list in 1970. The Prime Minister's books include: New Deal for Coal, 1945; In Place of Dollars, 1952; The War on World Poverty, 1953; The Relevance of British Socialism, 1964; Purpose in Politics, 1964; The New Britain, 1964; Purpose in Power, 1966; and The Labor Government, 1964-70, 1971.

CIA/DDI/CRS

29 January 1976

[redacted] (b)(3)  
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(James) Harold WILSON

UNITED KINGDOM

Prime Minister

Addressed as:  
Mr. Prime Minister

Labor Party leader Harold Wilson, 59, has been Prime Minister since March 1974. He had previously served as Prime Minister during 1964-70. Personally friendly toward this country, he has met with President Gerald Ford and Secretary

of State Henry Kissinger several times in 1975, beginning with a state visit to Washington in January. Following an overwhelming endorsement of continued EC membership in a 5 June referendum, he affirmed that Britain would play a full and constructive role in EC affairs. He has reshuffled his Cabinet to move some of the vocal anti-Marketeers to less important positions and is expected to focus immediately on his country's growing economic problems. In addition, Wilson has pledged full support to NATO.

Wilson is a consummate politician--skillful, shrewd and subtle. A political pragmatist, he has shown great skill in uniting the diverse elements of his party, but he has never been a popular leader. His brilliant mind, political acumen and phenomenal debating skill and wit are offset, in the eyes of his critics, by a record of opportunism, deviousness and shifting loyalties.

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A man of simple tastes and habits, Wilson shuns ordinary social life. He apparently has no close political "cronies." Apart from his family and politics, reading and golf are his chief interests. Married, he has two sons.

17 June 1975

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(b)(3)

(James) Harold WILSON

UNITED KINGDOM

Prime Minister

Addressed as:  
Mr. Prime Minister

Upon taking office as Prime Minister in March 1974, Labor Party leader Harold Wilson, 58, became head of the first minority Cabinet in 45 years. He has chosen a moderate Cabinet and has presented a domestic legislative program that he feels will receive opposition support. He apparently intends to defer more radical measures, e.g., nationalization, until he feels ready to stand the test of another general election.

Wilson favors the "renegotiation" of Britain's EC entry terms. He has pledged to cut defense spending but has made clear his firm support of the Atlantic Alliance. Wilson, who met with President Nixon at the White House in 1970, will probably continue close Anglo-US relations.

A political pragmatist, Wilson has demonstrated great skill in uniting the diverse elements of his party. His deftness in parliamentary maneuvering and persuasion

Despite his 29 years in Parliament, Wilson has never been a popular leader. His brilliant mind, political acumen and phenomenal debating skill and wit are offset, in the eyes of his critics, by a record of opportunism, deviousness and shifting loyalties.

A man of simple tastes and habits, Wilson shuns ordinary social life. He apparently has no close political "cronies." Apart from his family and politics, reading and golf are his chief interests. Married, he has two sons.

19 March 1974

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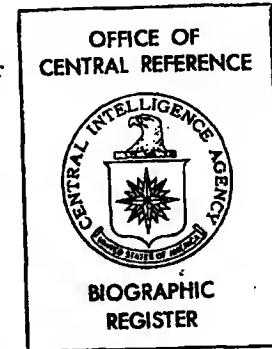
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UNITED KINGDOM

James Harold WILSON

Prime Minister and First Lord  
of the Treasury

Harold Wilson became the youngest British Prime Minister in this century when the Labor Party, after 13 years in Opposition, won a narrow victory in the October 1964 general election. During his first year in office he met a series of financial and political crises with courage, confidence, patience, and imperturbability. Having established himself as a national leader, whom the country at large no longer regarded as a partisan Labor Prime Minister, Wilson and his party were returned to power with a substantial majority in the general elections of March 1966. Recently, however, a combination of political and economic setbacks at home and abroad have seriously reduced the morale and prestige of his government.



Elected party leader in February 1963, following the death of Hugh Gaitskell, Wilson successfully united Labor's diverse elements within a few months. Never a doctrinaire socialist, but rather a pragmatist, keenly aware of the realities and uses of power, Wilson, as Prime Minister, has shown the same managerial skill in his government appointments, placing moderates in key Cabinet posts, and assigning "leftists" to neutral positions. The juxtaposition has enabled him, with decreasing effectiveness, to keep control of his government and party, including those Laborites who object to his general support of US actions in Viet Nam, his "East of Suez" defense policy, his efforts to obtain British entry into the Common Market, and to the essentially conservative measures he has had to adopt on the domestic front because of Britain's economic problems. Although Wilson emerged from Labor's Annual Party Conference in October far less battered than most observers had expected, recent events have resulted in a new low in Labor's popularity as well as serious doubts regarding Wilson's effectiveness as the party's leader. A series of fall strikes, increasingly severe by-election defeats, unfavorable trade statistics that led to the recent devaluation of the pound sterling, Britain's latest rebuff in seeking Common Market membership and a growing opposition and independence among leading cabinet members resulting from [redacted] handling of the recent South African arms embargo issue have all combined to create a "crisis of confidence" in his leadership. Wilson has never been a party figure to inspire affection, warmth or spontaneous loyalty in the manner of Gaitskell, Attlee or Aneurin Bevan. His popularity during his first year or so in office arose from public faith in him as a shrewd, tough manager of events and men, and no one seemed very much concerned about his reputation for deviousness or other personal shortcomings, so long as he seemed to be successful. Today, however, following his party's recent setbacks, Wilson's worth as an electoral asset is for the first time in doubt. Although he still possesses a brilliant mind, a phenomenal memory and a debating skill and caustic wit which no Conservative can match, in terms of political leadership and popularity, Wilson has fallen behind Tory leader Edward Heath.

(b)(1)  
(b)(6)

(b)(3)

(b)(3)

James Harold WILSON (Cont'd.)

The son of an industrial chemist, Harold Wilson was born on 11 March 1916 in Yorkshire. He won scholarships to secondary schools and to Jesus College, Oxford, and taught economics at his university until World War II when he was drafted into the Civil Service. He resigned to contest the 1945 election, and won the Ormskirk seat for Labor (he now represents Huyton, Lancashire). In the Attlee Labor Government he held several junior ministerial posts, and in 1947 entered the Cabinet as President of the Board of Trade when he was only 31. In Opposition he served as his party's chief spokesman on financial affairs and later on foreign affairs before he became leader. Raised as a Congregationalist, the Prime Minister is a man of simple tastes and habits. He shuns social life, and apparently has no close political "cronies." Apart from his family and politics, reading and golf are his chief interests. A short, stocky man, he smokes a pipe constantly, enjoys plain food, and drinks moderately (lager, bourbon whiskey). Wilson married Mary Baldwin, the daughter of a Congregationalist minister, in 1940. They have two sons

(b)(6)

15 January 1968

(b)(3)

(b)(3)

UNITED KINGDOM

James Harold WILSON

## Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury

Harold Wilson at 48 became the youngest British Prime Minister in this century when the Labor Party won a narrow victory in the October 1964 election. Party leader only since February 1963, he successfully united Labor's diverse elements within a few months, bringing it back into power after 13 years in opposition. He showed the same managerial skill in his government appointments, placing "moderates" in key cabinet posts, and assigning safe spots to "leftists." Labor's slim majority in Parliament and the serious British economic situation have forced Wilson to keep in abeyance much of his party's program to reform and reshape basic national policies and institutions. His support of the US action in Vietnam, and the essentially conservative measures he has taken to deal with Britain's problems have cost him Labor support, particularly from the left wing, and he now faces a more aggressive Conservative leadership. Wilson appears confident that the Labor Party can continue to govern, and predicts that the year ahead will see the breakthrough to a just and powerful Socialist Britain.

A former economics don and statistician, Wilson has a brilliant mind, organizational ability, debating skill and a cutting wit, and unusual political acumen. Since he entered Parliament in 1945, he has held a series of important posts: President of the Board of Trade in the Attlee Government (1947-51); Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer (1955-61); and Shadow Foreign Secretary (1961-63). While always a hero to the more militant local Labor Parties, he was not personally popular with the Labor MP's but was respected for his talents. The center and right wing in particular accused him of overweening ambition, opportunism, deviousness, and shifting political loyalties. Most damaging was his lack of support for Gaitskell (then party leader) during the bitter intra-party fights over nationalization and defense policies, plus Wilson's subsequent bid for the leadership in 1960. He was elected party leader after Gaitskell's death apparently because he was the only Labor MP with the necessary qualities for a potential prime minister. Although he has "flirted" with the left, Wilson is not a doctrinaire socialist. He is above all a pragmatist, well aware of the realities of power. His commitment to close Anglo-US relations is not based solely on sentiment. Wilson has made many trips to the US (both in and out of Office), and Moscow, and in 1958 visited Peiping.

The son of an industrial chemist, Harold Wilson was born on 11 March 1916 in Yorkshire, won scholarships to secondary schools and to Jesus College, Oxford, where he had a brilliant academic record. He taught economics at his university until World War II when he was drafted into the Civil Service. Raised as a Congregationalist, Wilson is a man of simple tastes and habits, and takes little interest in ordinary social life, music or the arts. Married in 1940, he has two sons.

September 1965

(b)(3)